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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, March 29, 2004, at 12:30 p.m.

Senate

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2004

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. STEVENS].

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Sovereign Lord, You are our strong shelter and hiding place. We praise You for Your love and Your wisdom. You are too wise to ever make a mistake, too loving to ever do anything unkind. When we are unfaithful, eternal God, You remain faithful. Our times are in Your hands.

Thank You that though human beings plan, You have the final word about what happens to our world. Forgive us when we lack the patience to wait for the unfolding of Your powerful providence. Help us to comprehend clearly the road You desire us to travel.

Bless our Senators as they lean upon Your wisdom. Give them the courage to choose the harder right and accomplish those things that will unite rather than divide. Keep them from falling and prepare them to stand before You with great joy.

We pray this in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning the Senate will be in a period of morning business to allow Senators to make statements. No rollcall votes will occur today. I do not anticipate a lengthy session of the Senate today. As a reminder, we will begin the welfare reauthorization bill on Monday, and I will be laying out Monday's schedule at the close of today's business. But I would also remind Members that any votes ordered on Monday will be delayed to occur on Tuesday.

OBESITY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I will be back a little later this morning, but I do want to take an opportunity, seeing our distinguished President pro tempore in the chair today, to comment on an issue I know he feels strongly about as well as I, and that is the issue of physical activity and nutrition and the growing obesity epidemic in the United States.

It is an issue that has, thank goodness, received increasing attention over the last several weeks and months; that is, obesity, the epidemic now in the United States, and its very direct impact on one's overall health, whether it is quality of life or how long one lives.

Despite tremendous gains in public health in this country and, indeed,

around the world, America remains the most overweight country on the globe. Indeed, it is taking its toll in a way that people are only now beginning to realize. But thank goodness they are.

In fact, earlier this year, the CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, released data showing that lack of physical activity and poor nutrition are the second leading causes of death in the United States of America. That is second only to smoking. In fact, if recent trends continue, obesity can soon overtake smoking as the leading cause of death in the United States. Looking at the recent trends, it is very likely that, indeed, will be the case.

The good news about that, and I would also say about smoking—although smoking is such a powerful addiction, it has been shown to be such a challenge—but the good news about the obesity epidemic we are seeing is, through education and a change in lifestyle alone we can prevent this epidemic from occurring. We can prevent this killing.

The trend has been over the last 30 years. It is one of these problems that has been around. We have always had obesity for whole different reasons. But for new reasons—lack of activity, poor nutrition, promotion of poor nutrition—we have had this trend of obesity skyrocketing over a 30-year period. I am very hopeful that by doing our part in the Senate, as elected representatives, as leaders, through the hearing process, through education, through serving as direct examples, we can help turn this tide and again reverse it over the next several years.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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